SOCIAL VICES AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Social vices is an unhealthy behaviour that are considered as social and educational plague that have negatively influenced the entire educational system. This paper is aimed at investigating the impact of social vices on the academic performance of students in secondary schools. The paper identified the various forms of social vices prevalent in senior secondary schools as well as its causes and effects on the academic performance of senior secondary school students. Recommendations were made on how social vices can be tackled in senior secondary schools.

Introduction

Education is an indispensable tool for the youth development and national development. Education trains the mind and changes the thinking and orientation of people. It is a long term investment by any nation to make itself a better place to live and a better place where people can make their living. Lehr (2014) is of the opinion that the noble goals of education can never be achieved in a vacuum. They would be achieved under a conducive and peaceful atmosphere or environment. Social vices are acts of indiscipline that are found in every educational institutions namely; primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, meaning that it is very rare to find any educational institutions void of social vices. They are acts that interfere with the teaching and learning process manifesting in various ways such as vandalism, truancy, bullying, alcoholism and the rest. Rightly put by Ayobami (2011) solid moral and intellectual terrain expected to be found in secondary schools has suddenly became slippery veering towards an unprecedented magnitude of immorality. Even though some strategies to combat social vices were put in place in one form or the other by educational administrators in schools especially secondary schools, its consequences on students' academic performance in schools has been a great concern in the society.

Igwe and Nath (2005) reports that various form of social vices by students have negatively influenced the entire educational system. Most of institutional certificates and transcripts records have been discredited for reasons traceable to academic and moral deficiencies.

Conceptual Review

Student's Academic Performance

Student's academic performance is the term used to indicate a student's achievement after

completing a course of study from any educational institution. According to Tadese *et al.* (2022) defined academic performance as the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has attained their short or long term educational goals and is measured either by continuous assessment or Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Thus, a student who earns good grades or award in science has achieved in the academic field of science.

However, the trend of graduating students is not proportional to the trend of enrolled students and an increasing number of students cannot read mission suggesting that they did not perform well in their academics. Several factors are identified to have contributed to low academic performance of senior secondary students in Nigeria part of which are impact of anti-social behaviour among the students.

Concept of Social Vices

Social vices is defined as a bad habit or immoral acts. In Latin word, it is referred to as "vitium" meaning defect or failing. Social vices are bad traits, unhealthy and negative beahviour that stray from accepted moral norms and frowned at by members of the society. Social vices are mostly found among young individuals (males and females) commonly found in the habits such as drug abuse, alcoholism, smoking, casual sex or premarital sex, conflict, pocket picking, indecent dressing, prostitution, cultism, examination malpractice, hooliganism, thurgery, gambling, rape, sexual assaults and many other unhealthy lifestyles.

According to Igwe (2014), social vices are anti-social actions which breach societal norms, values and more and they range from obscene dressing to sexual harassment and promiscuity, cultism, kidnapping, examination malpractice, hooliganism, character assassination, impersonation, financial fraud among others.

Types of Social Vices

The types of social vices that commonly found among the senior secondary school students in Nigeria are:

Drug Abuse: Drug abuse is irregular, excessive or self-administration use of drugs, whether prescribed by a doctor or not. Government agencies acknowledged that drug abuse is any use of illicit substances such as cocaine, Indian hemp and heroine. Drug abuse is normally caused by ignorance, pleasure, curiosity, incorrect drug dosage, addiction, peer pressure, depression e.t.c. Oromareghake, Arisi & Igbo (2013) are of the view that drug abuse has many causes via: cultural, social, economical, psychological and family pathology. Drug abuse among the senior students in secondary schools in particular is caused by deliberate action to aid them with their studies especially those with poor educational records, and also those with family problems, while a large number of the students get involved through the influence of the peer group for them to be accepted as bonafide members.

Examination Malpractice: This is any examination exercise that is not conducted in accordance with specified norms set by the examination institutions. Elujekwute (2019) defines

examination malpractice as any irregular behaviour exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the conduct of examination in or outside the examination hall before, during or after such an examination. Mgbekem (2006) is of the opinion that examination malpractice is an organised cheating practice adopted by candidates of an examination who have no confidence in themselves to pass the examination. Examination malpractice has gone beyond simple 'giraffing', an act of stretching necks to catch glimpse of what other students has written in their scripts to be copied to a variety of sophisticated methods such as writing relevant information on the subject to be taken on different objects or part of the body or clothes to be recopied in the course of examinations. Some students even bring their notes into the examination to be copied while some exchange their question papers with answers jotted on them during examination.

Examination malpractice according to Chukwuemeka and Agbara (2013) is caused by moral decadence in Nigeria. In Nigeria society today, cheating, dishonesty, embezzlement of public funds and stealing of public properties does not attract the condemnation and punishment deserved. Also, Oromareghake, Arisi and Igbo (2013) reports that, the emphasis on paper qualification or certificate is another cause of examination malpractice. If admission to schools and employment are based on actual performance of candidates during entrance examinations or interviews rather than on mere certificates, examination malpractice would be minimized or discouraged.

Bullying and Fighting: This is associated with students in secondary schools in Nigeria of today, making the schools to become breeding grounds for touts and militia. Senior class students are always found in the habit of bullying their junior students in school, some fight each other to the point of inflicting injury on each other.

Cultism: Cultism is one of the several social problems especially among the youths in our various educational institutions and in the society at large. The phenomenon, according to Adegbija (2003) is the formulation of a group initiates or adherent round the figure of a saint or even a living being. Cult is an organisation in our society tends to believe in a particular system of religious worship with a view to keeping it from others. Erika and Elda (2015) defined secret cults as a group of people who share and propagate peculiar secret beliefs divulged only to members. Also, their initiation procedures often involve secret rituals like swearing by some deity, human blood and other procedures which send shivers down the spines of most people.

According to Mohammed (2011) many authors have taken time to carefully observe the immediate or remote motive for membership of cultism, which are varied in nature but very strong in attracting or inducing students into cultism in schools. These include anti-social behaviours, personality needs, home background, the prolonged military reign, mental breakdown, societal conflict, peer group motivation and examination phobia among others. According to Bolakale and Kolo (2002), the home plays an important role in the promotion of cultism. Home where parents belong to

secret cult, the children are bound to be predisposed to cult activities. On arriving the school, adult behaviour is directly traceable to his/her childhood and adolescence experience. Parents who are active cultist are noted for often initiations and participation.

Students are been known to join secret cults because of their childhood friends. Students are easily influenced by their peer group and do not want to be seen as weak in comparism to their contemporaries. In addition is the over ambitious desires of students to get quick money or influence which is a key attraction into cultism. In the sense that they believe that this could get them connected with powerful and influential people in the larger society who are ex-members of secret cult both in the secondary schools and higher institutions of learning and with this, they believe they will be able to become rich quickly without much stress.

Truancy and Absenteeism: This is the practice of staying away from school without permission or without good reason. This habits so worrisome to the point that Dagih (2015) laments that it is a common sight to run into multitudes of students closing before closure hours while other bunches deliberately absent themselves from classes. When these habit persists, it breed people who turn out to be lazy and display nonchalant attitudes towards societal obligations.

Causes of Social Vices in Nigeria Senior Secondary Schools

Negligence of Parents and Broken Home: When the parents who are custodians of societal values and morals fail to carry out their obligations or their primary duty in shaping the lives of their children or wards through supervision and attention make them fall into those traps. When the parents are not there for these children, they go to wrong people, move with them to take advice and when their movements are not queried nor their academic progress followed up, there is great tendency they are hired into deadly acts.

Peer Group: Most times, this is the major causes of youth involvement in social vices. The peer group provides the developing child with broad range of behaviour, cultural and subcultural values. Children spend more time with their friends in schools or at home and they became easily influenced due to their weak nature. Youths / children have high level of curiosity to learn, and to practice new things meaning that being integrated into a group in which drug use is approved leads youths into illegal drugs and other social vices.

To Satisfy Curiosity: Secondary school students, especially those in senior class sometimes want to change the way they feel, to avoid pains, stress or to feel happier. Mostly they want to be accepted or be sociable as well as satisfying their curiosity. However, in a bid to solve one problem through indulging in one social vice or the other create avenue for new bigger problems.

Mass Media: Youths who watch a lot of television programmes (especially foreign and local films) learn to rely on stereotypes of the various groups presented by the media. Iya (2018) reports

that the youths transfer what they have learned from television to real life situations.

Perceived Impact of Social Vices on Students' Academic Performance of Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

1) *Pregnancy*: A pregnant students due to sexual promiscuity will surely face emotional, psychological trauma which will make her loss focus and attention on her studies. She might eventually stop schooling, get expelled from school or stop going to school while her mates would have been ahead of her if she finally return to school with the stigma of once impregnated.
2) *Deadly Disease*: Deadly diseases can be contacted leading to termination of lives and career.
3) *High Immoral Act*: High numbers of students who engage in evil acts in a school reduce the morality and standard of the school. Cult activities has became the priority of the members while other things like their studies became a secondary. These students are always busy initiating new members, meeting the needs of their members, and fighting which can eventually leads to death of the members or being rusticated from school. Being a cultist can graduate to high way robbery, bank robbery, rape, thuggery, taking of illegal substances. All these acts causes students to be withdrawn from schools by their parents due to unrest and insecurity poses by cultism or hooliganism.
4) *Vandalisation of School Properties*: Vandalisation of school properties / facilities have negative impact on teaching-learning activities in school which will also affect the performance of the students academic achievement.
5) *Psychological States of Students*: Social vices do affect the psychological equilibrium of the students leading to severe mental issues. This at the long run causes the victims to withdraw from regular school programmes. Students who engaged in social vices such as cultism, hooliganism and gangsterism, ingested certain toxic substances that they thought could make them bolder (Oromareghake *et al.*, 2013). This habit make them loss their mental balance as a result of the negative effect of drugs on their brain and invariably perform poorly in school.

Conclusion

Senior secondary school education is the level of education that prepare students for higher education and different occupational opportunities/endeavour. For this aim to be achieved, there is need of environment (society) free of social vices, meaning that both school and the larger society must be where high moral standard is reigning and social vices fought and eradicated.

Recommendations

- Good behaviour or habit should be reinforced and deviant behaviour be sanctioned to serve as deterrence to intending culprits.
- Teachers should lead by example, be a role model, do what they teach and be firm.
- Adequate facilities should be provided by educational administrators to ensure effective

teaching-learning process as well as to check and control every traces of any social vices in schools.

- High level of disciplines should be rooted in schools.
- Parents should create enough time for their children, give them close monitoring, be their intimate friends, listen to them and teach them moral values, by so doing, they will be able to curb social vices and reduce to minimal level if not totally eradicated.

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